

Korean Coconut Dusky Grouse with Broccoli

By Tom Dickson | Preparation time: 10 minutes | Cooking time: 10 minutes | Yield: 4 servings



I confess, there are no dusky grouse in North or South Korea. This recipe name refers to Montana's dusky (blue) grouse prepared with gochujang, a staple of Korean cooking.

The Korean Peninsula is home to one native grouse, the hazel grouse, also found across northern Eurasia as far west as Sweden. The quail-size bird, which lives in conifer forests, is among the world's smallest grouse. I could find no information on its table qualities.



Above: Hazel grouse
Below: Dusky grouse



But I do know that our dusky grouse is considered by many hunters to be Montana's tastiest game bird. The flesh is pale with a hint of sweetness that may come from the berries the grouse eat during September when most are harvested.

Dusky grouse are best cooked unadorned, either plucked and roasted (rubbed with olive oil or soft butter beforehand) or sautéed in olive oil. A seasoning of salt and pepper afterward is all that's needed.

But if you have several duskies—or pheasants, ruffed grouse, or chicken breasts or thighs—and want to try something quick, easy, and delicious, this variation of a *New York Times* recipe is wonderful. *NYT* readers gave it nearly 3,000 five-star reviews, and it passes my “fast and fabulous” test for inclusion in *Montana Outdoors*.

Gochujang, found in the Asian food section of most large supermarkets, is a fermented red chile paste made from spicy Korean chile peppers and glutinous rice. This recipe combines it with coconut milk, which mellows the spiciness, and fresh ginger for brightness.

I have to imagine that somewhere in North Korea or South Korea, someone has made something like this with a hazel grouse or two.

The recipe calls for broccoli as the vegetable accompaniment, but cauliflower or brussels sprouts work fine instead. ■

—Tom Dickson is the *Montana Outdoors* editor.

INGREDIENTS

2 T. canola oil
 1½ lbs. boneless, skinless dusky or ruffed grouse, pheasant, or chicken breasts or thighs, cut into 1½-inch pieces
 Kosher salt and black pepper
 1 (2-inch) piece fresh ginger, peeled and minced (about ½ cup)
 ½ c. unsweetened coconut milk
 2 T. light brown sugar
 2 T. gochujang paste
 2 T. low-sodium soy sauce
 1 lb. broccoli florets, cut into 2-inch pieces
 Cooked rice, for serving
 Sliced scallions or chopped fresh cilantro, for garnish (optional)

DIRECTIONS

In a large nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium-high setting. Season meat with salt and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden all over, about 3 minutes. Add ginger and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 2 minutes.

Stir in coconut milk, sugar, gochujang, and soy sauce and bring to a simmer, stirring until gochujang dissolves. Gently simmer over medium-low heat, stirring, until meat is cooked through, about 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a saucepan of salted boiling water, blanch broccoli until crisp-tender, about 2 minutes. Drain.

Divide meat and broccoli among plates; spoon with sauce. Serve with rice. ■



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